

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5 and 11 are amended. No new matter is added.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Haugland in the February 22, 2006 telephone interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

During the telephone interview, Examiner Haugland indicated that the proposed amendments to the claims to clarify that the buffer unit is configured to separate from the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding forward would raise new issues. Although applicants believe that such amendments only amplify issues previously argued, Applicants have filed an RCE to expedite prosecution.

Claims 7 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The features recited in claims 7 and 9 are described by the specification as originally filed, for example, at page 14, lines 20-25. Therefore, claims 7 and 9 fully comply with the written description requirement of 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 5, 6 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,685,471 to Taubenberger. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 5 recites *inter alia* "a buffer unit provided between the paper-position restricting section and the frictionally transporting section and configured to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding back, and to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding forward." It is respectfully submitted that Taubenberger also fails to disclose, teach or suggest these features.

The Office Action refers to the festoon device 10 of Taubenberger as corresponding to the recited buffer unit. However, the festoon device 10 of Taubenberger is not configured to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding back, and to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding forward as recited in claim 5.

As described in column 4, lines 8-19 of Taubenberger, the festoon device 10 is a mechanical web accumulator. The festoon device 10 has two fixed rollers and one oscillating roller. The oscillating roller is moved counter to a spring while in contact with the paper web A to hold the paper web A under a constant tension. Thus, the oscillating roller is always in contact with the paper web A and is not configured to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding back, and to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding forward.

As described in the specification, the buffer unit is spaced apart from the continuous paper during the printing operation and only comes into contact with the continuous paper during back feeding. This may lead to various advantages such as those described on pages 12 and 13.

In fact, the specification specifically teaches that such a conventional mechanical accumulator, required in prior art apparatus, is not required because of the buffer unit recited in claim 5. See the first full paragraph on page 13 of the specification.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Taubenberger fails to disclose, teach or suggest each and every feature recited in independent claim 5. Thus, claim 5 is patentable over Taubenberger. Claims 6 and 10 are also patentable over Taubenberger at least in view of its dependence on claim 5, as well as for the additional features it recites. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Taubenberger is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 8 and 11 are rejected, alternatively, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Taubenberger or under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Taubenberger in view of Ohba. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 11 each recites *inter alia* "a buffer unit provided between the paper-position restricting section and the frictionally transporting section and configured to come into contact with a surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding back, and to separate from the surface of the continuous paper when the continuous paper is feeding forward." As discussed above with respect to claim 5, Taubenberger fails to disclose, teach or suggest these features.

Ohba is cited only as teaching locating a printing section downstream of feed rollers of a paper transporting mechanism. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Ohba does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above with respect to Taubenberger. Accordingly, in view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 11 are patentable over Taubenberger and Ohba, individually or in permissible combination.

Claims 2, 4 and 8 are patentable over Taubenberger and Ohba at least in view of the patentability of claim 1 from which they depend, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, 8 and 11 over Taubenberger alone and Taubenberger in combination with Ohba is respectfully requested.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Taubenberger in view of Ohba, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,603,800 to Focke et al. (Focke). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Focke is cited only as teaching spaced apart rollers 33, 34. As such, it is respectfully submitted that Focke does not remedy the deficiencies of Taubenberger and Ohba discussed above with respect to claim 1. Thus, while Applicants respectfully disagree that Focke teaches that the looping rollers 33 and the counter rollers 34 are spaced apart so that the web

is fed in a straight line as asserted by the Office Action, as these rollers do not keep the web in a straight line, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 is patentable over the asserted combination of Taubenberger, Ohba and Focke as least in view of the patentability of claim 1 from which it depends. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 3 over Taubenberger, Ohba and Focke is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination

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